

How to Prevent Accidents

One of the statistics the department uses to gauge the safety of our roadways is the number of accidents that are reported to the state in a calendar year. Every person is encouraged to drive defensively and practice basic driving skills. In most cases, an accident occurred because at least one driver committed a violation of a city ordinance or state statute. The most common contributors to a collision are speed, disregarding traffic control signals, following too close, improper backing, distracted driving, and failure to yield.

The department maintains an aggressive traffic enforcement program. Drivers are encouraged to know what the posted speed limit is for the roadway. The city utilizes solar speed signs and a mobile speed trailer to remind drivers of their speed and encourage compliance. All roads in Tullahoma are 30 mph unless posted or signal controlled otherwise.

The disregard for a traffic control signal or device generally refers to traffic lights, stop signs and yield signs. Drivers should exercise care when approaching a traffic signal. If on approach the signal is green, and has been green for a lengthy time, be prepared to stop. The yellow signal is a caution the light is about to turn red and drivers should stop and not enter the intersection. A stop sign requires the driver to cease all vehicle movement. This does not include a rolling stop, or Slightly Tapping On Brake. Exercising the right of way at a stop sign controlled intersection may require eye contact, hand motions, or patience. When entering a roadway from a cross street a driver must yield to approaching vehicles. A rule of thumb is to look Left, Right, then Left. A driver is most likely to be struck by a vehicle approaching from the left.

Paying attention to your driving is also very important. Drivers must understand the vehicle is producing a large amount of power and cannot be stopped on a dime. Drivers must provide adequate stopping distance in the event the vehicle in front of them makes a sudden turn or abrupt stop. Just as crucial to your following distance is the need to exercise care when backing the vehicle. Drivers must remember that good backing habits include making sure the path is clear before backing, and once a driver begins to back they continue to look to the rear while the vehicle is in motion.

Finally, good driving habits include wearing your seatbelt. The state statute requires the use of seat belts and proper child restraint systems. The use of electronic devices while operating a vehicle leads to distracted driving. If you must use your devices, safely pull off the road.

Safe driving is everyone's concern. Each accident, whether a driver contributed or not, results in property damage, possible injury, time lost for repairs, and out of pocket expenses. Please take your time, drive defensively, and abide by the posted traffic devices that regulate vehicle movement on our roadways.

If you have any questions about this or any police department concern, I can be reached at (931) 455-0530 or pblackwell@tullahomatan.gov.